IPC - Committees
USIB
IHC

25 May 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Processing Staff, Office of
Planning, Programming and Budgeting

Leo:

As I mentioned to you on the telephone the other day, I thought
it might serve some useful purpose if I were to jot down some personal
views about the DIA proposal to create a new committee and four sub-
committees to deal with information handling.

Support information handling problems are ordinarily outside the
scope of CODIB interests and we only become involved when some committee
activity generates a requirement for support. In a sense, therefore, my
comments are gratuitous and may even be irrelevant. Nevertheless, I have
the impression that the DIA proposal offers nothing new; it simply offers a
variation of the same old theme that was played for two or three years by
SCIPS and has been replayed during the last two or three years by the task
teams under CODIB. I have always had difficulty understanding the rationale
used to support the treatment of "information handling" as an entity unto itself.
Everything we do is "information handling." Everytime one picks up a pen,
touches a typewriter or adding machine key, speaks into a dictaphone, reads
a paper, or moves a document from "in" to "out" information is handled. It
is absolutely inconceivable to me that the totality of information handling
could ever be brought into definable focus in such a context by any configu-
ration of committees and subcommittees. Yet the definition of information
handling offered in the footnote of the draft DCID is all that inclusive and
then some.

Perhaps the SCIPS difficulty was its attempt to deal with the
intelligence community as a "totality" and its magnitude was so over-
whelming that they were unable to sort out lesser totalities and define them
in comprehensible orders of magnitude. Perhaps the task team problems
were caused by having their terms of reference defined in relation to sub-
jects too broad to be meaningful; so broad in fact that each of them was con-
fronted with a multitude of problems within the subject of their assignment

and in attempting to deal with the broad function they found it impossible to define specific problems or clusters of related problems in a scope which would permit them to be dealt with reasonably and adequately.

It is my impression that neither the SCIPS nor the task team efforts have ever made any attempt to deal with "systems". Apparently there has never been an attempt to identify systems in a community or inter-agency context and then to define "system totalities" in comprehensible sizes such that there is some hope of achievement with whatever resources may be available. However, there is little or no point in attempting to define systems unless we first know what we intend to do about it after they have been defined. Perhaps there should be some attempt to define systems without regard to hardware. Perhaps what we need is a committee to attempt to define systems which have realistic totality; to identify problems which require definition within system totalities; and then perhaps to determine what can reasonably be done about them in an inter-agency context where there is no management structure to support problem solution.

/s
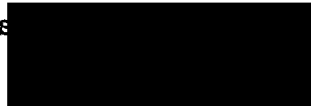
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Chief, Support Services Staff

DDS/SSS/RHW:jms (25 May 67)

2